First Congregational United Church of Christ, Ypsilanti

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No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

December 20, 2015 10:00 am

Fourth Sunday of Advent

An open and affirming community committed to peace and justice

WELCOME TO OUR WORSHIP & LIFE TOGETHER: We invite you to participate in this community of faith. If you are a visitor for the first time, please fill out the welcome pad being passed around. We invite you to join us for Friendship Time (refreshments and conversation) at the conclusion of worship.

WE WELCOME CHILDREN so that they may come to understand the worship experience. Families are encouraged to talk about the parts of worship so children may understand and participate. During the worship service we have a time for children with the minister on the rug in the center of the worship space followed by Sunday school (September-May).

Hymns are found in the following books:
NCH *(Black, hardcover "New Century Hymnal")*
Sing! *(Black, softcover, "Sing! Prayer and Praise" songbook)*
ES *(Green, softcover "Everflowing Streams" songbook)*

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Fourth Sunday of Advent - LOVE

Prelude Steve McGhee

Invitation

All people are welcome to participate in this community of faith
If you have questions about becoming a member of this church, please speak with the Pastor or any member of the Community.

Welcome Ivan Harner

Members and Friends, please sign the Friendship Pads.
Guests, please complete a Visitor Card and place in the offering plate so we may have a record of your visit.
We hope you will join us for Friendship Time and refreshments after the service.

Thank you for worshiping with us today!

***Please rise in body or spirit as you are able**

Announcements Ivan Harner

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

***Gathering Hymn** **"Longing for Light" (Verses 1-4)** **INSERT**

Candle Lighting **Steve McGhee and Tiffanie Waldron**

Reading of the liturgy for lighting

Unison Prayer

Loving God, Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Magnify your love within us. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

Ringing the Bell

Focusing Prayer (Unison) Ivan Harner

We thank you for this place in which we dwell,
For the love that unites us,
For the peace accorded us this day,
For the hope with which we expect the morrow,
For the work, the health, the food
And bright skies which make our lives delightful
For our friends in all parts of the earth. Amen.
"A Christmas Prayer", Robert Louis Stevenson

***Hymn** **"Star Child"** **174 SING**

LISTENING FOR GOD

Readings and Carols

All readings were written by Ann Weems and are found in her book *"Kneeling in Bethlehem"*

Singing God's Praise

Reading	***Yesterday's Pain***	**Kelsie Molter**
Anthem	**"Noel, We Sing"**	**FCC Choir**
Reading	***In December Darkness***	**Ann Marie Nicoll Turner**
Hymn	**"My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise"**	**106 NCH**
Reading	***The Coming of God***	**Tad Wysor**

There is Hope

Reading	***Wouldn't It Be Grand To Be An Angel***	**Lorraine Sayles**
Anthem	**"Rise Up Shepherd"**	**FCC Choir**
Reading	***Getting To The Front of The Stable***	**Margaret Harner**
Hymn	**"Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear"**	**105 NCH**
Reading	***Angel-Filled Advent***	**Carol Hall**

Peace & Gifts

Reading	***Mary, Nazareth Girl***	***Donna Eyster***
Anthem	**"Calypso Lullaby"**	**FCC Choir**
Reading	***What Do I Want For Christmas***	***Wayne Burling***
Hymn	**"Watcher, Tell Us of the Night"**	**103 NCH**
Reading	***In Search Of Our Kneeling Places***	***Alex Goldsmith***

The Light

Reading	***Had We Been There***	***Barbara Garland***
Anthem	**"Who's That Baby"**	**FCC Choir**
Reading	***The Plastic Angel***	***Jamie Goldsmith***
Hymn	**"O Come, O Come Immanuel"**	**116 NCH**
Reading	***The Christmas Spirit***	***Sarah Fugate***

CONVERSING WITH THE HOLY ONE

Prayers of the People Carol Hall

All are invited to offer a prayer, testimony, praise report or prayer request at this time.
Please limit your sharing to one or two sentences and remember confidentiality issues.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (Unison) -- Alternate Version Carol Hall

When we say the Lord's Prayer, please feel free to follow the traditional form or use language that feels comfortable to you, e.g. Mother, Creator, God, Friend, or Realm, Kindom, Wisdom.

Offering this prayer in unison brings us together and the words illustrate our common journey

Our God, who is in us on earth,
Holy is your name in the hungry who share their bread and their song.
Your Realm come, which is a generous land of milk and honey.
Let us do your will,
standing up when all are sitting down,
and raising our voice when all are silent.
You are giving us our daily bread in the song of the bird
and the miracle of corn.
Forgive us for keeping silent in the face of injustice,
and for burying our dreams,
for not sharing bread and cup,

love and the land, among us now.
Don't let us fall into the temptation of shutting the door through fear,
of resigning ourselves to hunger and injustice,
of taking up the same arms as the enemy.
But deliver us from evil.
Give us the perseverance and the solidarity to look for love,
even if the path has not yet been trodden,
even if we fall;
so we shall have known your Realm,
which is being built for ever and ever. Amen.

– Central American Lord's Prayer, adapted
From Bread for Tomorrow: Prayers for the Church Year

***Hymn** **"Mary, Woman of Promise"** **123 NCH**

RESPONDING TO OUR CALLING

Visitors please know that our service is our gift to you - do not feel obligated to give.

Invitation to the Offering (Unison) Ivan Harner

Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning, we thank you for the hope, the peace, the joy and the love you unfailingly offer us. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us that peace comes from justice. Help us to remember there is always joy if we seek it. Love us and give us strength to do your work. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you so that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

Offertory Steve McGhee

***Doxology** **"Take My Gifts"** **562 NCH**

Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me,
Gave me light and food and shelter, Gave me life and set me free,
Now because your love has touched me, I have love to give away,
Now the bread of love is rising, Loaves of love to multiply!

Prayer of Dedication** ***(Unison) Carol Hall

God calls us to be people of love. This is often very hard because many of us are difficult to love. And yet, love provided to those who seem least deserving, is the best way to show love to a troubled world. Jesus loved everyone and challenges us to do the same. Amen.

DEPARTING WITH PRAISE

***Hymn of Departure** **"O, Little Town of Bethlehem"** **133 NCH**

***Benediction** Carol Hall

Postlude Steve McGhee

(Please be seated for the Postlude)

Passing the Peace *Share a greeting with your neighbor as we transition to our snack.*

Open and Affirming Covenant of
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Ypsilanti.

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Ypsilanti celebrates everyone, including people of all ages, races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family configurations, economic circumstances, physical, cognitive or emotional abilities, education or spiritual or religious traditions.
All are welcome to participate fully in the life, leadership, ministry, and missions of this church as we seek to grow together in a safe and nurturing community of faith.
We strive to demonstrate in all ways that "NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!"

First Congregational United Church of Christ
PO Box 980413
218 North Adams Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
734-482-6980
website: ***www.ypsiucc.com***

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God is still speaking,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Our Volunteers	Today: Dec 20th	Christmas Eve: Dec 24th	Next Sunday: Dec 27th
Usher	Marty Kleino	???	Lyle Molter
Preaching	Carol Hall	Carol Hall	Carol Hall
Worship Leader	Ivan Harner	Wayne Burling	Donna Eyster
Worship Set-up	Glenda Horvath	Wayne Burling	Glenda Horvath
Acolyte	Hunter Turner	???	Kelsie Molter
Friendship Time	Melanie Harner	N/A	Glenda Horvath
Sunday School	Children remain in service	N/A	???

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE GIVING TREE: is on the wall in the multi-purpose room. Requested are $25 gift certificates from Target. Ideally, they will be returned by December 13 but will be put to good use after that date as well. These are given out to families who may not have a lot of resources this year. They could be internal families, WICIR families, foster families or other families who come to our attention. Thank you for your support!

PASTORAL CARE EMERGENCIES: If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Glenda Horvath, 734-904-0420

NEW ADDRESS: Lorraine Sayles' new address; Orchard Hills Manor, 2139 Georgetown Blvd., Ann Arbor, 48105. Her phone number is the same as always (734) 483-3849.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE: Kindly remember in your prayers our members and friends who are sick and/or shut-in. Send a card or note to lift their spirits and yours as well.

Fran Pebbles' address: *American Homes Carpenter, 3470 Carpenter Rd., Apt 332, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Phone: 734-975-0987*

Sally Dusbiber's *address'*: *Silver Maples of Chelsea, Room 1211, 100 Silver Maples Dr., Chelsea, MI 48118. Sally's direct phone line is 734-433-2396 and the Silver Maples line is 734-475-4111, x217.*

IMMIGRATION MINISTRY (WICIR): For information about what's happening with Immigrant Rights and ***Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights,*** or if you are interested in learning ways to help, please contact Margaret Harner at 734-483-3464 or through their Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/WICIR .

MICHIGAN OPEN & AFFIRMING COALITION: For information about what's happening with **Michigan Open and Affirming Coalition,** or if you are interested in joining us, please contact Wayne Burling at 734-377-0696. More information can be found on their website http://www.mi-ona.org or on facebook at https://www.facebook.com/groups/onami/

WASHTENAW REGIONAL ORGANIZING COALITION: "First Congregational is a co-founding institution of the new local "organization of organizations" **WeROC (Washtenaw Regional Organizing Coalition).** In many ways, WeROC is a larger illustration of the values and mission we try to live out at First Congregational. The diverse faith congregations and labor and community organizations that make up WeROC are, at our core, focused on intentionally reweaving the frayed fabric of community -- at a time when forces are at work every day to keep us fragmented, suspicious of each other, feeling isolated and on our own. We are showing by example that people from many backgrounds and perspectives can, even today, come together in powerful ways around our common values and *actually change* unjust public policies. WeROC is a part of the S.E. Michigan organization MOSES and the national Gamaliel Foundation.
See Tad Wysor (tadwysor@gmail.com, 734 883 3225) for more on how First Congregational is connecting with current WeROC issues and actions.

OUR WEBSITE: http://www.ypsiucc.org Let Wayne know if you have any additional items to be added. He could use lots more pictures. Also check out and like our Facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/pages/First-Congregational-United-Church-of-Christ-Ypsilanti/115695119913 .

KROGER FUNDRAISER: HAVE YOU *RE-REGISTERED* WITH KROGER!! Everybody that shops at Kroger and has a shopper's card ***MUST*** register. ***Last Year's registration expires May 1st*** and you are not getting credit for you purchases until you re-register for the current year.

Go to www.kroger.com and click "**REGISTER**". Follow prompts to register your frequent shopper card number. Then link to the **Community Rewards** site and register with our church. Our number is **83263**, or you can find our name in drop down list. Any questions contact Barbara Garland, bargarland@yahoo.com, 734-662-5803.